

MANAGEMENT UNIT 26: Lower Gakona River

Background

This management unit includes state-owned and state-selected lands in the lower Gakona River drainage. The southern part of this unit has been selected by the state and Ahtna, Inc. Primary existing land uses are for hunting and trapping. The unit has a high concentration of nesting trumpeter swans. A series of lakes located just east of Hogan Hill could have potential for canoeing. The U.S. Air Force is currently evaluating the lower part of this subunit (near Gakona) as a possible site for an Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System.

Management Intent

The state land in this unit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on protecting trumpeter swans and their nesting habitat. To protect nesting swans, seasonal limitations will be imposed on access by tracked vehicles and heavy equipment. Certain other activities may also be subject to seasonal limitations (see management guidelines below). Although a system of lakes in this unit has potential for development of a canoe trail system, encouraging this recreational use could lead to increased disturbance of swans. Canoeing in the area is allowed; however, the state will not encourage such activity.

All land is open to mineral entry except for Spring Creek, which is closed to mineral location to protect salmon and resident fish spawning and rearing areas.

Management Guidelines

Trumpeter Swan Habitat. The guidelines for Documented High Value Trumpeter Swan Nesting and Concentration Areas on page 2-10 apply to this entire unit. The Alaska Legislature should consider designating trumpeter swan habitat as a critical habitat area to retain the land in public ownership and provide greater long-term protection to the trumpeter swans.

Backscatter Radar. If the USAF selects a site for a backscatter radar system in this area, the facility should be developed to protect trumpeter swans and swan habitat.

Mineral Closure. Land within 200 feet of Spring Creek and the creek itself will be closed to mineral location.

The complete set of management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. Any of the guidelines could apply to uses within this management unit; however, guidelines that are most likely to apply are:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Recreation, cultural, and scenic resources
- Transportation
- Public access

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY **MANAGEMENT UNIT: 26 - Lower Gakona River**

| SUBUNIT | LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED) | LAND USE DESIGNATIONS | | | | PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)* | COMMENTS |
|---------|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| | | SURFACE | | SUBSURFACE | | | |
| | | PRIMARY USE(S) | SECONDARY USE(S) | LOCATABLE MINERALS | LEASEABLE MINERALS | | |
| 26 | State, State-Native selected | Wildlife habitat | Public recreation Forestry | Open to mineral entry | Available for leasing | Grazing, Most land leases,* ² Land offerings, Remote cabins | Swan guidelines apply |

*¹ Other uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits, that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2.

*² See management guidelines

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 26 - Lower Gakona River

RESOURCE

SUBUNIT

26

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Fish | salmon - s/r steelhead - s |
| Forestry | moderate conif. and decid., scattered |
| Historic-Cultural | unknown |
| Minerals | outside of known mineral terraces |
| Oil and Gas | low |
| Recreation | high for Taiga Lakes area; canoeing |
| Settlement Suitability | low |
| Wildlife | A-1 habitat - trumpeter swans, moose, caribou; B-1 habitat |

Important trails: Trail from Richardson Hwy. north of Sourdough provides access to western part of unit. Two 17(b) easements reserved from Richardson Hwy. to southern part of unit.

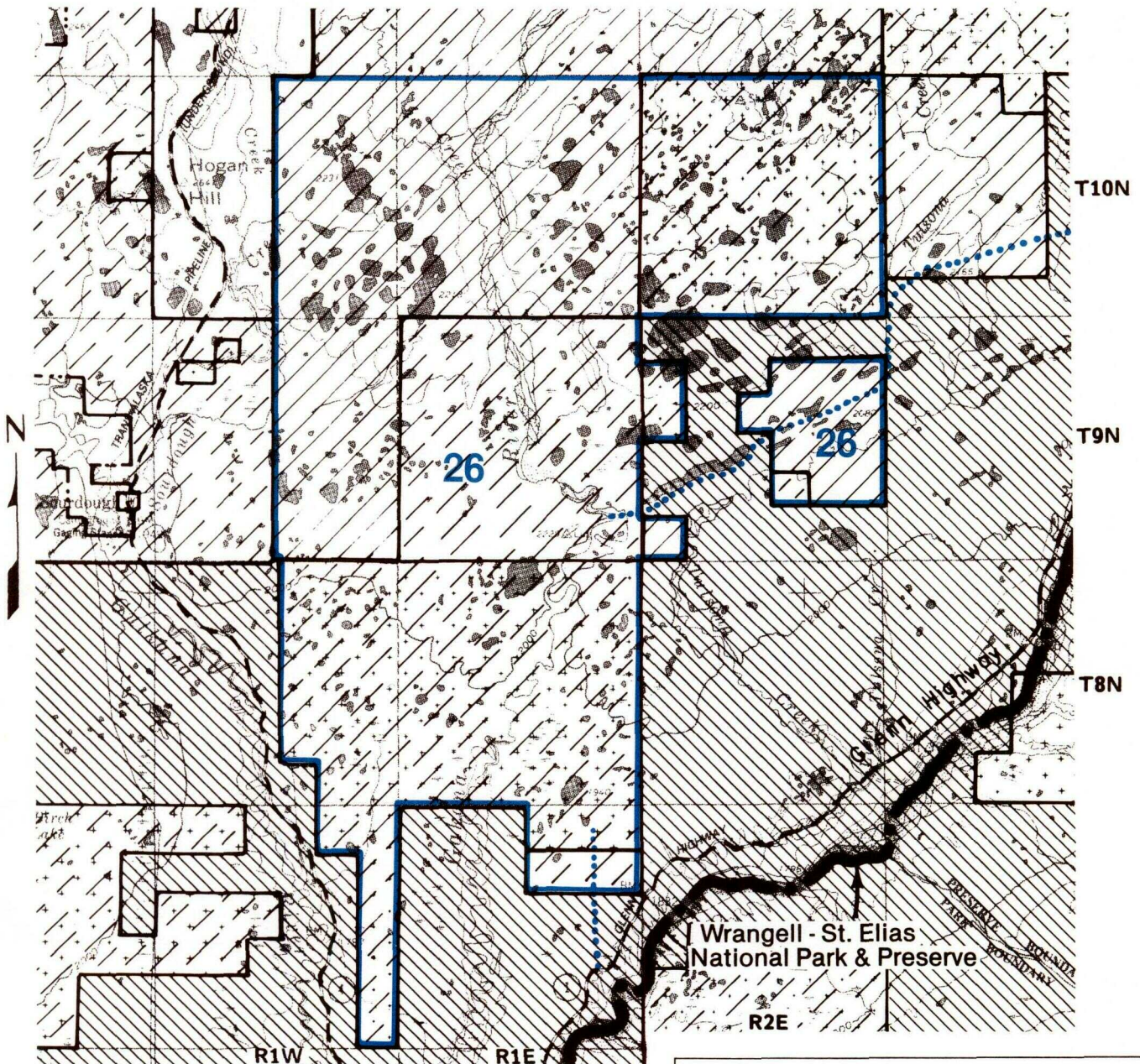
17(b) easement from Tok Cut-off 8 miles northeast of Gakona.

17(b) easement from Chistochina Trail across Sinona and Tulsona Creek.

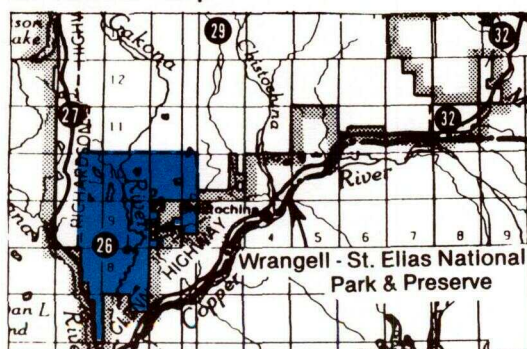
For definitions of ratings, see glossary. For more detailed information on any resources, see resource elements published under separate cover.

MANAGEMENT UNIT 26

Lower Gakona River



Location Map



U.S.G.S. Quad:
Gulkana

Map scale:
1:250,000

- State Owned
- State Selected
- Native/Private Owned
- Native Selected
- Federal
- Public easements to state land - ANCSA 17(b)

Map shows approximate location of easements to state land and major trails across state land. Portions of trails may cross private lands. See appendix D.